--- ‘Leave it to Beaver’ - from 1878 to 1892 - scanned at 150% scale ---

By my way of thinking the original plates for *lithographing* the G_strips of the **3rd BABN Contract** were made using a master die showing three beavers in a pond, *with foliage* over the large beaver. These plates were then used to prepare the stone.

3rd BABN Contract (1878) - the ‘original’- three beavers *with foliage* over the large beaver

Stone *lithographing* of strips does not require an extensive use of the steel plates involved, and many of the original three beavers *with foliage* plates survived until BABN lost the contract in 1897.

As individual plates were becoming worn or simply to improve the muddy appearance of the beaver on the cigar strips for the **4th BABN Contract** the original ‘beaver’ master die was re-worked to eliminate the foliage over the large beaver. Traces of the foliage can still be seen on this *re-worked die* - above and to the left of the middle small beaver, and also sprouting out of the large beaver’s back. As required by plant use in the late 1880’s this re-worked die was used to make new ‘second generation’ printing plates, thus giving rise to both *lithographed* and *recess printed* strips using three beavers *without foliage* over the large beaver.

4th BABN Contract (1886) - the first ‘re-working’ - three beavers *without foliage* over the large beaver

Further work was done on this re-worked ‘beaver’ die for the **5th BABN Contract** of 1892, completely eliminating the small beavers, and strengthening the bull rushes and lily pads beneath the large beaver. As BABN lost the Contract to ABN in 1897, only a few ‘third generation’ printing plates were prepared from this third and final BABN ‘beaver’ die.

5th BABN Contract (1892) - the second re-working - a single beaver *without foliage* over the beaver

--- BABN Control Numbering ---

For years I have puzzled over the use of 4 mm. and 5 mm. control numbers by BABN, tossing various ideas around. From their gaining of the printing contract in 1867 until 1874 BABN operated facilities in Ottawa and in Montreal, and their stamp imprint read as "British American Bank Note Co., Montreal & Ottawa".

In 1874 they closed their Ottawa plant, moving all production to Montreal, and their new stamp imprint now read as "British American Bank Note Co., Montreal". The control numbers applied in Montreal were 4 mm. in height.

Under terms of the **4th BABN Contract** in 1886 they were required to re-open the plant in Ottawa. The Ottawa plant used 5 mm. control numbers and the new imprint now read as "British American Bank Note Co., Ottawa".

After 1886 sheets printed in Montreal were occasionally shipped *control-free* to Ottawa where 5 mm. control numbers were applied, and conversely sheets printed in Ottawa (when necessary) could be shipped *control-free* to Montreal where 4 mm. controls were applied. Most of the control numbers used under the **5th BABN Contract** of 1892 occur with 5 mm. figures, indicating that more work was being done in Ottawa.

It is difficult to separate these strips into printings under a particular BABN Contract by using their control numbers, since the seventh digit - the 'million' prefix - was not added to the control number.

Probably my confusion regarding the 4 mm. and 5 mm. control numbers is due to the fact that BABN was producing stamps in two locations. The same Brandom stamp printed in Montreal carries 4 mm. controls, and carries 5 mm. controls when printed in Ottawa.

Montreal seems to have printed most their strips using the old three beaver *with foliage* plates, while Ottawa seems to have been using more of the later three beavers *without foliage*, or the single beaver *without foliage* plates.

I had previously thought that all of the control numbers in the "Series of 1883" began by using 4 mm. figures, and then switched to 5 mm. figures upon passing one million - a magical but impractical idea. This view probably came from the fact that most of the 5 mm. control figures are to be found on the *later* printings of these strips.

Having spent many hours sorting through the John McKay record (provided by Chris Ryan), I feel that the answer is not too complex. From the **2nd BABN Contract** of 1873 until the signing of the **3rd BABN Contract of 1886** all their production took place at a single location - in "Montreal". The BABN "Montreal" plant applied their 4 mm. control figures to the then current "Series of 1883". When the "Ottawa" facility was re-opened in 1887 Ottawa applied the 5 mm. control numbers, but by this time the production of most of the "Series of 1883" strips had exceeded the one million mark. The fact that many of the controls were now in 5 mm. figures, was simply due to their being produced in the "Ottawa" plant, and had no relation to my 'magic' 1,000,000 figure.

A confirmation of this fact is the presence of many 4 mm. control numbered "Series of 1883" strips, using the three beavers *with foliage*, and the single beaver *without foliage*, design found under the **5th BABN Contract** of 1892. Their production was usually a long way past my 'magic' 1,000,000 strips - simply put, these 4 mm. *late date* strips were printed and control numbered in "Montreal".

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